
**NARROMINE SHIRE COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING BUSINESS PAPER – 13 AUGUST 2025
MAYORAL MINUTE**

1. MAYORAL DIARY

July 2025

- 7 July Councillor Briefing Session
- 9 July Ordinary Council Meeting
- 10 July Interview on 2DU Radio
- 11 July Citizenship Ceremony
Meeting with NBN Representative
- 17 July Interview with Prime 7 News in relation to Craigie Lea Industrial Precinct
- 18 July Meeting with Thriv3 Indigenous Corporation at the Narromine Aquatic Centre
Meeting with General Manager and Director Community and Economic Development
- 23 July Workshop LGNSW Facilitator – General Manager Performance Review Process
Meeting with Deputy Mayor and General Manager
- 24 July Orana Mid-Western Police District Awards Presentation Ceremony
Alliance of Western Councils Dinner
- 25 July Alliance of Western Councils Board Meeting

RECOMMENDATION

That the information be noted.

2. DEPUTY MAYORAL DIARY

July 2025

- 7 July Councillor Briefing Session
- 9 July Ordinary Council Meeting
- 11 July Annual General Meeting for Narromine Hospital Auxiliary
- 23 July Workshop LGNSW Facilitator – General Manager Performance Review Process
Meeting with Mayor and General Manager
- 31 July Narromine Shire Youth Council Meeting

RECOMMENDATION

That the information be noted.

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3. REPRESENTATIVE REPORT ALLIANCE OF WESTERN COUNCILS BOARD MEETING

My representative report regarding the Alliance of Western Councils Board Meeting held on 25 July 2025 is attached (**see Attachment No. 1**).

RECOMMENDATION

That the information be noted.

Cr Ewen Jones
Mayor

COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVE REPORT



COUNCILLOR REPRESENTATIVE REPORT ON ATTENDANCE AT: Alliance of Western Councils Board Meeting - Gilgandra

COUNCILLOR: Mayor Ewen Jones

DATES ATTENDED: 25 July 2025

1. Main Purpose of Meeting

The Mayor is Council's representative on the Alliance of the Western Councils Board.

2. Key Messages/Highlights of Relevance to Council

Presentation - Clare Pearson – CEO Little Wings

- Little Wings has been operating for 13 years, with Medical Wings operating for 5 years.
- The Pilots, who are commercial pilots, volunteer their time.
- Little Wings is 90% operated by volunteer nurses etc.
- The Doctors who fly out bulk bill
- Instead of families needing to go to Sydney to see a pediatrician or other specialist, Little Wings fly them to regional and remote NSW towns.
- Little Wings has 175 clinicians, including 13 Pediatricians, and travel an average of 120,250 kms and help out 3,255 families every year.
- Each flight costs an average of \$1,500.
- The total cost for each location for 12 visits is \$18K per year, for each town they visit.
- Little Wings own 4 Baron aircraft, and 1 Navaho aircraft.
- 30% of patients are first nations peoples.
- Little Wings has created an 85% reduction, 8,000 less beds being needed at John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle.
- An extra 1,000 children have become engaged with Little Wings, most of whom have never seen a doctor.
- Little Wings already fly a Psychiatrist to the NHS "Hub", who also bulk bills.
- Little Wings will send a package, explaining what funding they would like to achieve.
- It was discussed that local businesses might consider contributing. This would be fully tax deductible.
- The Little Wings concept is a great step towards Closing the Gap.

Presentation - Glen Colley Manager Local Water Utility Reform DCCEW

- Local Councils are responsible for looking after town water. This includes regular testing under the LG Act 1993, section 8A(2)(e).
- The State Government continues to provide funding to Local Government for water operations.

- Focusing on 16 Remote and Very Remote NSW LGA's, plus 4 Alliance Councils – Narromine, Dubbo, Gilgandra and Mid-Western.
- Process so far – Consultation Oct-Nov 2024, Options Analysis Oct 2024 – February 2025, Council Reference Group December 2024 – April 2025, Government Response pending.

What we have heard so far:

- Strong opposition to corporatisation, especially State based service delivery.
- Strong opposition to County Council model (especially separating water and sewer)
- Strong opposition to removing water and sewer staff from Councils (due to the potential impact on general purpose Council finances)
- Strong preference in exploring the Western Councils Water Alliance model.

Also:

- Structural change won't overcome the need for significant capital spending in very remote councils.
- No one size fits all approach.
- Distinct geographical split between Alliance Councils and those in the south-west and Namoi.
- Decision making can't be based only on economic analysis (need to consider local circumstances, impacts on councils, and maintain local decision making).
- There is a need to focus on strategic planning
- There is an opportunity to test the Alliance model.

A potential way forward:

It is proposed to co-design the western NSW councils in two phases, targeted water utility Strategic Planning Support and Capability Building Pilot Program, comprising of:

- Phase 1: Strategic Planning gap analysis for Western NSW councils (to roll out from late 2025 to mid-2026).
- Phase 2: A two-year, targeted support and capability building Program for the 20 councils, commencing 1 July 2026 (subject to approval funding from the NSW Government).

Delivery of Phase 2 will be via a combination of expert departmental staff, as well as in-regional staff **embedded within the Western Councils Alliance** to test the alliance model.

Note: Non-alliance Councils in western NSW will also be supported to address the gaps, but would not be subject to the embedded, Alliance support component.

How could the Alliance-based resource operate:

- Funding agreement between the department and the host Council (Mid-Western)
- Recruitment undertaken as a joint effort including the Alliance and the department.
- The Alliance would need to ensure appropriate governance and oversight is in place, to provide accountability to the department as the funding body.

- Through co-design (Alliance councils and the Department), the program would need to develop a prioritisation framework to ensure the work program considers the needs of all Alliance councils.

Presentation - Member for Dubbo Electorate – The Hon Dugald Saunders MP

Spoke about the impact of renewable energy:

- REZ – New transmission lines, 3GWA – 12 GWA four of these.
- Little to no consultation with landholders
- What will the legacy be – Housing – affordable/refuse use?
- Rating system for different renewable companies.
- Getting power to the grid could cause power failures from overloading lines,
- We need cheaper power for businesses
- TfNSW jobs being reduced
- Discovery passes available for the XPT to boost visitor numbers to regional NSW
- Coalition funding pledged is coming to an end – start applying for new funding now.
- Dubbo Sports Hub funding debacle.
- REZ – will Councils have sufficient water/sewer/housing, as well as the impact on hospitals and all emergency services.

RFS

- About 200 new Firefighting vehicles have been purchased
- \$27M being spent on fire mitigation – working with other agencies to complete
- Hazard reduction – using cultural history techniques for back burning
- Recruiting for paid RFS staff – Fire Control Officers etc
- Vehicle annual inspections – some are not being done locally – being taken to Sydney on a truck carrier
- More sheds are needed to house RFS trucks

Presentation - Holly Davies - TfNSW

- Strategic Plan and Road Maintenance – Western Region Update
- Parkes bypass complete and is open.
- New Dubbo Bridge is progressing well – on time for completion in late 2026
- Narrabri to Moree road has new overtaking lanes completed
- Spring Creek 64 metre new bridge west of Narrabri is on track

Inland Rail – Narromine to Narrabri:

- Pre-delivery activities including geotechnical investigations
- In the last 3 months IRPL engineering team and field contractors completed most of their scope in the southern part of the Narromine to Narrabri section.
- All borrow pit geotechnical investigations are done and the IRPL will visit sites quarterly to monitor ground water levels.
- Utility investigations and built environment surveys have also been finalized
- Finally, autumn biodiversity surveys have wrapped up and the team is preparing for the winter surveying phase, (started 21 July 2025).
- The data from these investigations will help our engineers refine designs.

Road Maintenance Council Contract Update.

- There are currently 22 Council partners for the Road Maintenance Council contracts.
- The initial term of the current 3-year contract ends 30 June 2026.
- The western region allocation for 2025/26 across all programs of work applicable to RMCC is around \$140M. Contract Managers, Surveillance Officers and Council representatives are currently working through the Routine Maintenance Annual Plan (RMAP) approvals, and the confirmation of scope for ordered works program.
- TfNSW staff numbers are being cut between 300 – 900 – mainly from the Executive level

Presentation - Gerry Collins – NSW Government update – Premiers Department

- Our reach spans across 6 regions – North Coast, Hunter – New England, Central Coast, Illawarra Southeast, Riverina Murray and Western NSW.
- Our staff live in the communities they serve, ensuring we are always connected and engaged with local issues and people.

In relation to Alliance of Western Councils:

- Feedback from the Western Community Strategic Planning Forum held 4 March 2025. AWC Strategic Plan – Opportunities for joint work that can be considered by the Regional Leadership Group.
- Community Consultation Bill – Rolling out sector training and toolkit, QA system and tracking in train – issues that Councils have concerns about implementation.
- Western NSW Regional Leadership Group Priorities.
- Western Regional Coordination Team LGA's.

Western Regional Leadership Executive Priority Areas:

- Renewable Energy Transition
- Health Services
- Youth crime and social disadvantages
- Housing development and constraints
- Workforce shortages in critical sectors

3. Benefits to Narromine Shire Council

Keeping up to date with what is happening both with the Alliance of Western Councils. Networking and meeting other Mayors and General Managers.

4. Suggestions for Future Action (if appropriate)

Continued membership and attendance at meetings.

Mayor Ewen Jones

Date: 3 August 2025